anxa
92-B
26572

MEMORIAL EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS BY JOHN WHITE ALEXANDER

CITY ART MUSEUM
SAINT LOUIS

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016

https://archive.org/details/memorialexhibiti00alex

SPECIAL
EXHIBITION CATALOGUE
CITY ART MUSEUM
SAINT LOUIS

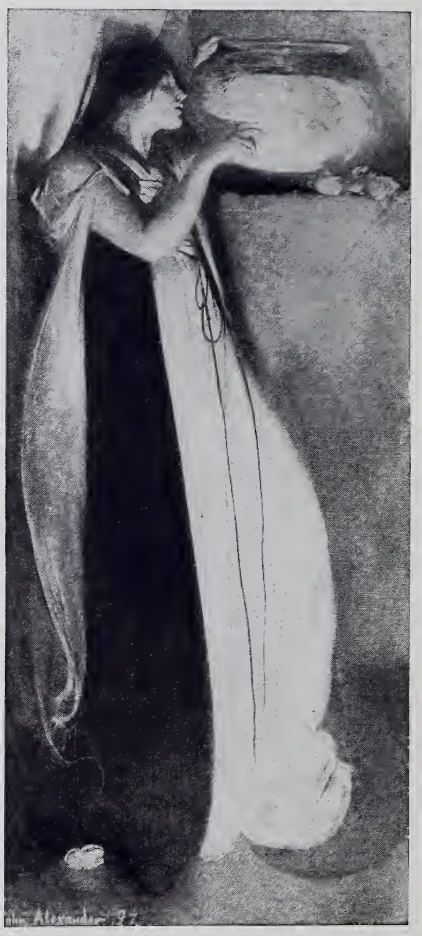
MEMORIAL EXHIBITION OF
PAINTINGS BY
JOHN WHITE ALEXANDER

OPENING APRIL 8, 1917
SERIES 1917 NO. 4

Copyright by the Detroit Publishing Co.

PORTRAIT OF MRS. JOHN W. ALEXANDER

The City Art Museum gratefully acknowledges the co-operation of the owners who have made this exhibition possible by generously lending their pictures. Among those who have thus assisted in the formation of the exhibition are Mrs. John W. Alexander; Mr. James W. Alexander; the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Boston Museum of Fine Arts; Miss Mary C. Wheeler; Wheaton College; John W. Beatty, Esq.; the Quadrangle Club of Princeton, N. J.; Julius Rolshoven, Esq.; Miss Elizabeth Averell, and Mrs. A. G. Hoffman.



Copyright by the Detroit Publishing Co.

ISABELLA OR THE POT OF BASIL

John White Alexander

JOHN WHITE ALEXANDER was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, October 7, 1856. His parents died when he was quite young, and he lived first with his grandfather and later with Colonel Edward J. Allen, who became his guardian.

At the age of eighteen, Alexander went to New York City to take up the study of art. Here he was given employment as an office boy by the firm of Harper & Brothers, who were to aid the struggling young artist in many ways in succeeding years. After a time he was given a position in the illustrating department, of which Mr. Charles Parsons was then the head. Woodcuts were at that time the principal means of illustration, and Alexander's first work consisted in drawing, directly upon the wooden block, the figures for such illustrations, the balance of the picture being usually put in by other artists. Reference to the files of Harper's Weekly for the years of 1875 to 1877 reveals an occasional signed cartoon or drawing by Alexander.

He served an apprenticeship of three years with Harper & Brothers, and then, in 1877, having accumulated the sum of $300, he set sail for Europe, in company with a friend, Albert G. Reinhart. Finding the "Ecole des Beaux Arts" in Paris, where they had expected to study, closed for repairs, the two friends proceeded to Munich, where Alexander entered the class of Prof. Benzcur. Becoming dissatisfied after a short stay in Munich, he went to Pölling, in Northern Bavaria, where at that time there was a small colony of American artists. In this city Alexander first began to paint, and from this city, also, he sent to the students' exhibition in the Munich Academy the drawings for which he was awarded his first medal.

About 1880 he joined a class of art students under Frank Duveneck, and spent the next two years in Italy, working in Florence during the winter and in Venice

during the summer. It was in the latter city that a chance meeting began the lifelong friendship between himself and James McNeill Whistler. During all this time Alexander supported himself by sending drawings back to Harper's. Later he started an art class in Florence, but finding that this seriously interfered with his own work, he determined to return to America.

With the exception of two summers abroad, the remaining years until 1890 were spent in Pittsburgh and New York. During one of these trips abroad, Alexander met Robert Louis Stevenson, then living at Skerryvore, England, and executed a portrait of him. The friendship of these two distinguished men calls sharply to mind the tragic similarity of their lives.

In 1887 the artist married Elizabeth Alexander, and three years later, on account of his ill health, he and Mrs. Alexander went to Paris, where they remained for eleven years. During this period, Alexander's reputation was established, and his works were received everywhere with honored recognition. In 1893 he exhibited at the Société Nationale des Beaux Arts in Paris a group of three portraits entitled "Portrait Gris," "Portrait Noir" and "Portrait Jaune." These pictures were given a place of honor in the Salon, and the young artist was elected an associate of the Société. In the following year he was elected to full membership.

After these distinguished honors, recognition from other cities came swiftly, and his works were invited to all the important exhibitions of Europe and America. Numerous medals and awards were received, and his paintings were placed in the museums of Paris, Odessa, St. Petersburg, Vienna, New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Philadelphia, Washington, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Minneapolis, Providence and other cities.

In 1901 Alexander returned, with his family, to New York, where he lived until his death, on the 31st of May, 1915. These years were for Alexander a period of continued and unceasing activity, notwithstanding his failing health. He was associated, either

as a member or officer, with twenty art organizations, the most important of which was, perhaps, the National Academy of Design, of which he was president. In this capacity, he labored for years, in spite of continued failure, to secure an adequate home for the Academy. As president of the National Academy, he was an *ex-officio* trustee of the Metropolitan Museum, a position to which he devoted much time and energy. Yet he continued to paint, to design scenery and costumes for tableaux and to engage himself in numerous other activities in behalf of art.

He was also President of the National Society of Mural Painters, New York; Sociétaire of the Société Nationale des Beaux Arts, Paris; Member of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers, London; Société Nouvelle, Paris; Sociétaire of the Royal Society of Fine Arts, Brussels; President of the National Academy Association; Ex-President of the National Institute of Arts and Letters; Vice-President of the National Fine Arts Federation, Washington, D. C.; Member of the Architectural League, Fine Arts Federation and Fine Arts Society, New York; Honorary Member of the Secession Society, Munich, and of the Secession Society, Vienna; Honorary Member of the Royal Society of British Artists, of the American Institute of Architects and of the New York Society of Illustrators; President of the School Art League, New York; Trustee of the New York Public Library; Ex-President of the MacDowell Club, New York; Trustee of the American Academy in Rome; Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, France; Honorary Degree of Master of Arts, Princeton, University, 1892, and Doctor of Literature, Princeton, 1909.

The art of Alexander reveals something of the innate charm and sensitiveness of the man. Though usually worked out in subdued tonalities, the strength and power of his paintings is unmistakable. They show the rare decorative sense of the artists, his feeling for the grace of line and pattern and his choice of consistent, satisfying color schemes.

His portraits are strong personal likenesses, exhibiting the significant characteristics of the sitter. Among the prominent men and women in various fields of endeavor whose portraits Alexander painted were Oliver Wendell Holmes, Joseph Jefferson, John Burroughs, Maude Adams, Alphonse Daudet, Robert Louis Stevenson, James A. McNeill Whistler, Grover Cleveland, Fritz Thaulow, Auguste Rodin and Thurlow Weed.

Some of Alexander's best known works are as follows: "Woman in Gray," Luxembourg, Paris; "Study in Black and Green," "Portrait of Walt Whitman" and "The Ring," Metropolitan Museum, New York; "Pot of Basil," Boston Museum of Fine Arts; "Phyllis," City Art Museum, St. Louis; "The Blue Bowl," Rhode Island School of Design, Providence; "Fritz Thaulow," Wilstach Gallery, Philadelphia; "The Quiet Hour," Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; "Portrait of Rodin," Cincinnati Museum; "Girl in Pink," Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh; "Sunlight," Art Institute of Chicago; "Dr. Holmes," Harvard University, Cambridge; portraits of Dr. McCosh and Mrs. McCosh and Dr. Patton, Princeton University; Dr. Chandler and Dr. Van Amringe, Columbia University, New York; Mrs. Wheaton, Wheaton College, Norton, Mass.; Mrs. Whitman, Radcliffe College, Cambridge; Mrs. Wooley, Mount Holyoke (Mass.) College; Dr. Hyde, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Me.; "A Worker," National Gallery, Washington; "A Ray of Sunlight," Society of Fine Arts, Minneapolis. Mural paintings: "Evolution of the Book," six lunettes, Library of Congress, Washington; "Evolution of the State," fourteen lunettes, Capitol, Harrisburg, Pa.; "Apotheosis of Pittsburgh," "Fire," "Crowning of Labor," seventy-five panels, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh.

The awards received by the artist include a Bronze Medal, Munich Royal Academy; Temple Gold Medal, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1897; Lippincott Prize, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts,

1899; Gold Medal, Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1900; Carnegie Prize, Society of American Artists, 1901; Gold Medal, Pan-American Exposition, Buffalo, 1901; Gold Medal of Honor, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1903; Corcoran Prize, Washington, D. C., 1903; Gold Medal, World's Fair, St. Louis, 1904; Medal of the first class, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1911; Medal of Honor, Panama-Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco, 1915.

J. B. M.

Copyright by the Detroit Publishing Co.

PORTRAIT OF WALT WHITMAN

Catalogue

1 PORTRAIT OF WALT WHITMAN
Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

2 "ISABELLA OR THE POT OF BASIL"
Lent by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts

3 PORTRAIT OF MISS MARY C. WHEELER
Lent by Miss Wheeler, Providence, R. I.

4 PORTRAIT OF MRS. WHEATON
Lent by Wheaton College, Norton, Mass.

5 PORTRAIT OF HELEN BEATTY
Lent by John W. Beatty, Esq.

6 STUDY HEAD OF A MUNICH PEASANT
Lent by Julius Rolshoven, Esq.

7 SKETCH OF BOOTH TARKINGTON
Lent by Quadrangle Club, Princeton, N. J.

8 LANDSCAPE (CORNISH, N. H.)
Lent by Estate of John W. Alexander

9 MARINE (MOONLIGHT)
Lent by Mrs. John W. Alexander

10 THE TENTH MUSE
Lent by Mr. James W. Alexander

11 ON A BALCONY
Lent by Mr. James W. Alexander

12 THE GOSSIP
Lent by Estate of John W. Alexander

Copyright by the Detroit Publishing Co.

PORTRAIT OF MRS. WHEATON

13 Landscape
Lent by Estate of John W. Alexander

14 Joseph Jefferson as Bob Acres
Lent by Estate of John W. Alexander

15 Peonies
Lent by Mrs. John W. Alexander

16 Memories
Lent by Mrs. John W. Alexander

17 Juliette
Lent by Estate of John W. Alexander

18 The Black Cat
Lent by Mrs. John W. Alexander

19 Old Cole
Lent by Estate of John W. Alexander

20 The Glass Bowl
Lent by Estate of John W. Alexander

21 The Blue Bowl
Lent by Estate of John W. Alexander

22 The Green Gown
Lent by Estate of John W. Alexander

23 A Rose
Lent by Estate of John W. Alexander

24 Reflections
Lent by Estate of John W. Alexander

25 White Birches
Lent by Miss Elizabeth Averell

26 In the Orchard
Lent by Mrs. John W. Alexander

27 Flowers
Lent by Estate of John W. Alexander

28 Landscape
Lent by Estate of John W. Alexander

29 Birches (Cornish, N. H.)
Lent by Mrs. A. G. Hoffman

30 Phyllis
Property of the City Art Museum